No. II-04-005
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February 24, 2004
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NRC TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATION OF REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AT OCONEE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a predecisional enforcement conference with Duke Energy Corporation officials on March 2 in Atlanta to discuss an apparent violation of NRC safety requirements at the Oconee nuclear station near Seneca, South Carolina.

The enforcement conference will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the NRC Region II office on the 24th floor of the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center at 61 Forsyth Street, SW. The meeting will be open to observation by interested members of the public, and NRC officials will be available before its conclusion to answer questions from those who attend.

NRC inspectors found that the licensee revised an analysis of a hypothetical steam or feedwater pipe break accident scenario in May, 2001, without first obtaining NRC review and approval. The revised analysis postponed the initiation time of required safety systems, which the NRC considers to be a change to the Oconee Final Safety Analysis Report that requires prior NRC approval.

NRC officials said this is an apparent violation, pending results of the enforcement conference, because the staff believes the change may involve an increase in risk, and that the NRC was not afforded an adequate opportunity to perform its regulatory oversight function by reviewing the change.

The conference is an opportunity for company officials to provide their perspective on the apparent violation and to clarify or correct any information they feel may be inaccurate or incomplete in the NRC inspection report. No decision on the apparent violation or any enforcement action will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made later by NRC officials.

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